TLG377

PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ADDRESS

BY

H.E. THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PORTUGAL

DR. JAIME GAMA

TO THE XL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

SEPTEMBER 23, 1985

*****
***
*

Portugal, being a country with a high rate of emigration, also intends to continue to actively participate in the activities of the working group of this General Assembly in charge of drafting a Convention on the Human Rights of all Migrant Workers and their Families, which program deserves our full appreciation.

Before changing subject, and bearing in mind that the rights of the people are part of the human rights, please allow me, Mr. President, to call your attention to the Question of East Timor.

In pursuance of Resolution 37/30 (1982), this Assembly entrusted the Secretary General with the mandate of trying to find a global solution to the problem of East Timor. Since then, we have given all our support to the endeavours undertaken by the Secretary General. The results of such efforts can be seen in his last progress report (document A/40/622), that has just been published, in which he relates in detail the Substantive Talks that took place from November 1984 on and during this present year at New York, between the Secretary General and his representatives as well as of Indonesia and of Portugal. In these

/....

talks humanitarian, religious and cultural questions were discussed and accomplishments were achieved in the solution of individual problems such as the repatriation of those who had been Portuguese civil servants. The religious freedom of the populations, the preservation of the cultural heritage of the people of Timor, and social and economic living conditions were granted special attention. On our part, we insisted and continue to insist on the importance of the respect for the human rights in the territory since we believe that we are still far from meeting all our expectations in this concern.

We celebrate this year the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the UN, and we have already celebrated the twenty fifth anniversary of the Declaration on Decolonization. The territory of East-Timor is on the list of non-autonomous territories. We firmly believe in the respect for the fundamental principle of self-determination of the peoples, and this is the core of the question of East-Timor. Until now, the right to self-determination has not been granted to the people of East Timor. And in this process of self-determination, in which the main beneficiary is precisely the people of the territory in question, such people

cannot be ignored when decisions are being made upon their own destiny.

We can say that the results already achieved in these talks are important, since such wide range of problems have been dealt with, and we can only reaffirm again here our support to the actions undertaken by the Secretary General in the fulffillment of his mandate.

We have already made clear several times before, the goals we have imposed upon ourselves: that is, the search for a dignified solution that will allow for the full respect for the religious and cultural identity of the people of East Timor, for the full satisfaction of their legitimate aspirations, for the improvement of humanitarian conditions and for the total respect of their right to self-determination. We are opened to concerted action, essential element in the settlement of international conflicts. We sincerely hope that some of the results already achieved as well as the overcoming of the difficulties will lead us through the only path we consider viable, and that, as stated the Secretary

..../

General in his report, the present constructive spirit that prevails in the talks will allow us to pass on to the following stage, where other questions should be discussed, keeping in mind the achievement of a "just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement".

~~When referring to the human rights I cannot but~~ recall that, ten years ago, these rights were clearly recognized and enshrined in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, of which my country was a party and which convened together 33 States of different political stands who pledged themselves to the implementation of actual measures that would entail the elimination of misunderstandings and violations of the obligation of the States to respect certain inalienable rights. An assessment of these developments was now made in Helsinki, just as it had happened before in Belgrade and in Madrid, to find out exactly how far apart are the theoretical commitments by the State, the actual implementation of measures, and the

..../